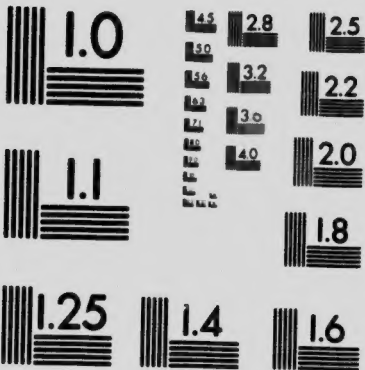




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UNITED CHURCH
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THE EVILS

UNITED CHURCH
ARCHIVES

OF

THE MODERN PLEASURE DANCE

A SERMON PREACHED

BY THE

REV. RICHARD HOBBS

Colborne Street Methodist Church, Brantford.

SUNDAY EVENING, MARCH 1ST, 1896.

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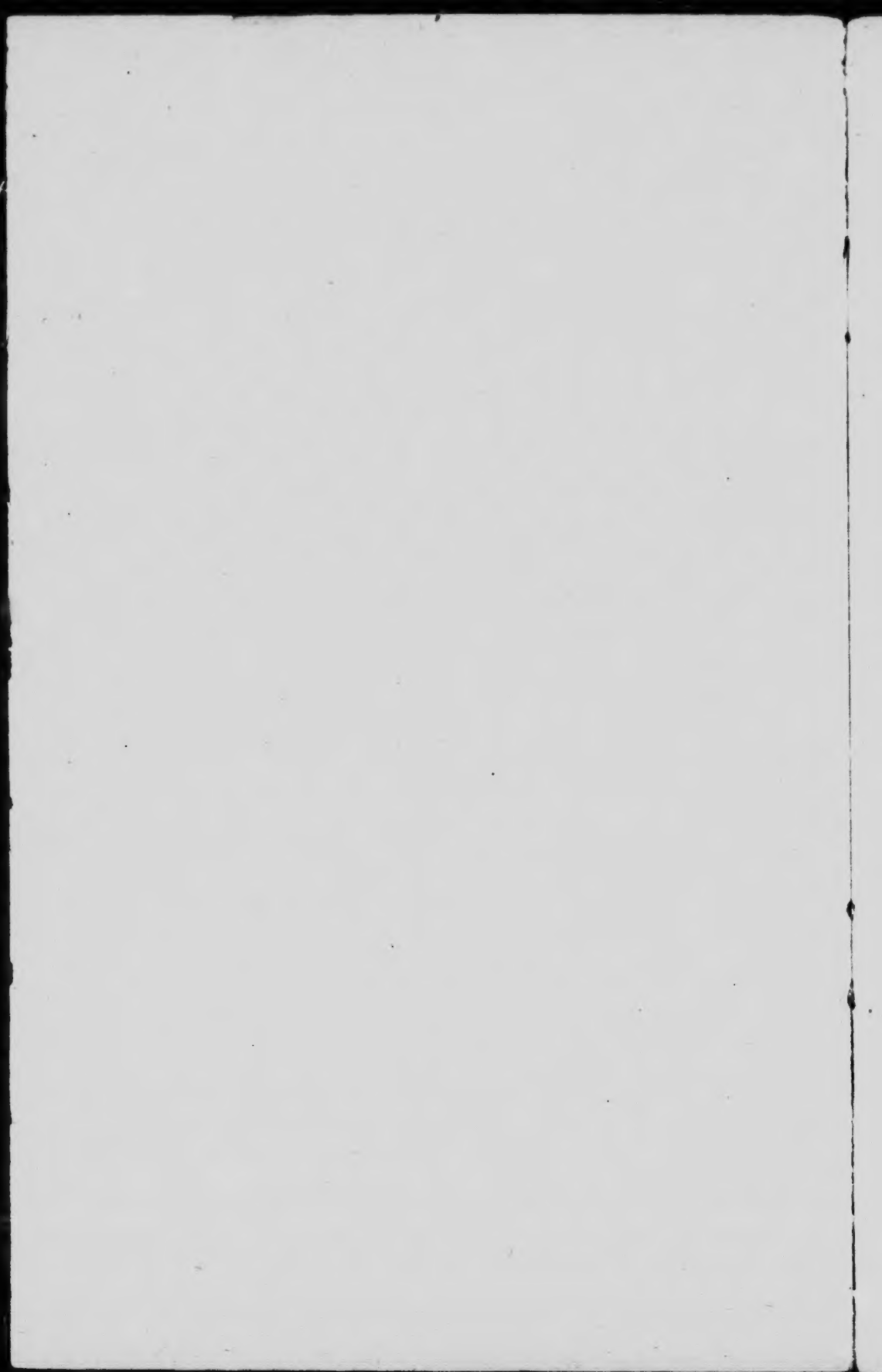
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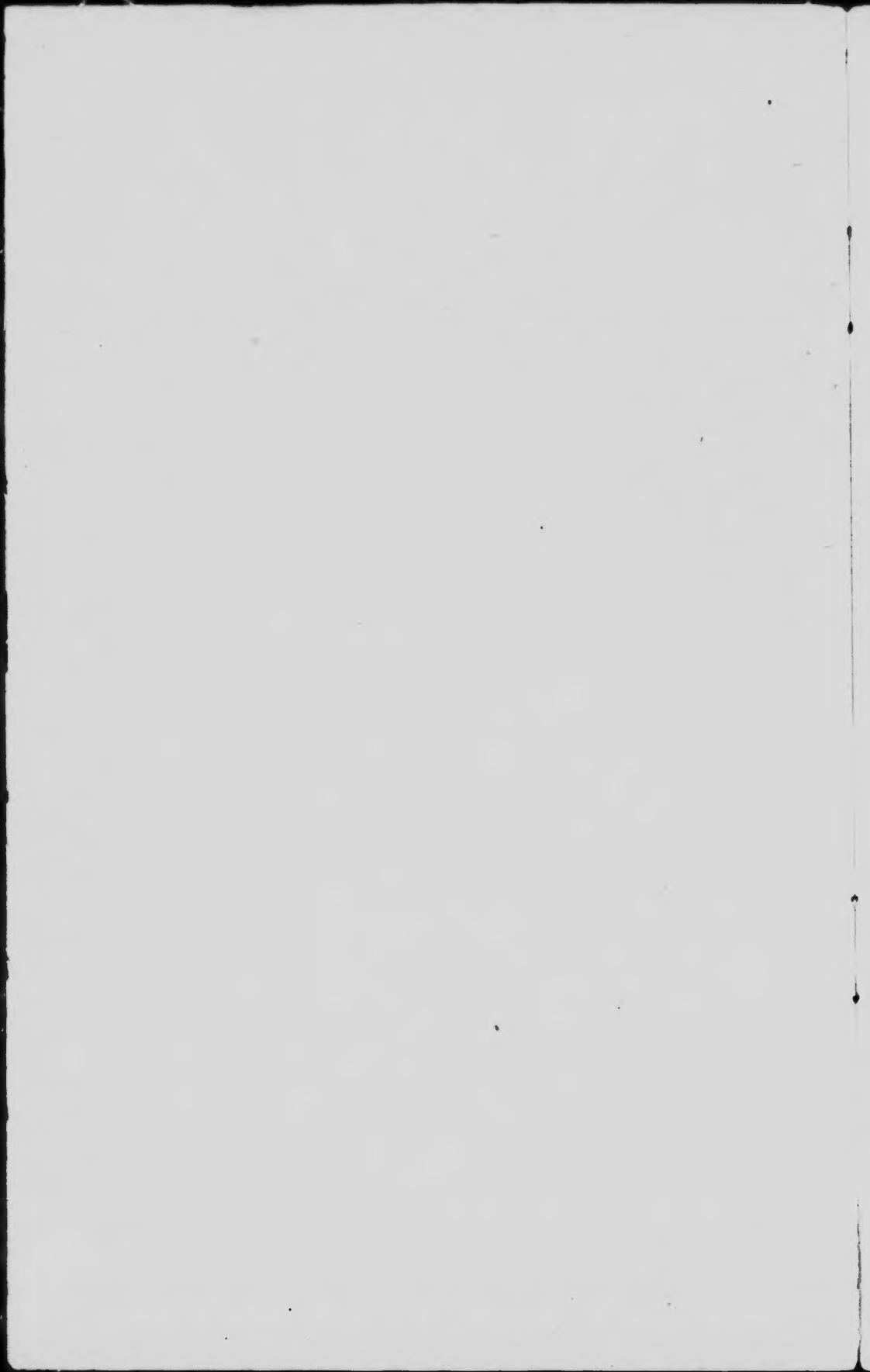


PREFACE TO THE SECOND EDITION.

It was my intention, if called upon to publish another edition of this sermon, to revise, and perhaps modify, certain phrases considered by some to be a little too strong. But having received the highest commendations from hundreds of my friends, and with their testimony to the good accomplished by the unvarnished presentation of the evils of the modern pleasure dance, and with the fact before me that these testimonies are from some of the most refined, cultured, and godly of both sexes to be found in the Church of Christ, I have thought it best neither to add to nor take from my former arraignment—not even the removal of a single *bur!* Hence, I send this edition forth in the name of Him whose I am, and whom I serve, with the sincere and earnest prayer that it may continue to be the word of warning to the multitudes who are still in danger of being led away from Christ and virtue by the flippancies of the Modern Pleasure Dance.

RICHARD HOBBS.

STRATHROY, January 1904.



The Evils of the Modern Pleasure Dance

A Sermon preached by the Rev. R. Hobbs, in the Colborne Street Methodist Church, Brantford, on Sunday evening, March 1st, 1896.

TEXT.—Ecc. III Chapter and a part of the fourth verse, "And a time to dance."

IT is only fair to say that as far as this Church is concerned, I do not know that there exists any particular need for my preaching on the evils of the modern pleasure dance, as to the best of my knowledge, we have not a single dancer on the roll of its membership. I think it is well understood that no modern pleasure dancer can retain membership in the church of which I am pastor, any longer than it takes to administer the discipline of the Church, and for the following good reasons: First, to be true and faithful to my ordination vows, I must faithfully administer the discipline of the Church. Secondly, I do not want, my brethren, to be embarrassed at the May district meeting, when some one of them will be called upon to answer in the affirmative the following question: "Has he duly observed and enforced our discipline?" Thirdly, the highest and best interests of the church, demand that all of its members acting out of harmony with its purpose and mission, should be disciplined. This is clearly taught both by Christ and His Apostles. And, fourthly, I believe that the very best results will be secured to the delinquent member by the faithful and loving enforcement of the rules of the Church, "all of which we are taught of God to observe, even in His written word." So said John Wesley, and so do we believe. But let us ever remember that there is a preventive side to the Gospel of Christ, as well as a remedy proposed for all human ills. And if, perchance, there are none in this church to be saved from this modern, successful snare of the devil—the pleasure dance—there are multitudes in danger of being entrapped, for the dancing-master has come to town. And we want, in the name of God and humanity, to prevent them from being allured, trapped and damned, by the fascinating pleasure dance. So that on the ground that an ounce of prevention is better than a pound of cure, I, as a Christian minister, feel called upon to sound an alarm in God's holy mountain, as I see the deadly sword of the modern pleasure dance, coming upon this land. In deciding to preach a sermon on the evils of the modern pleasure dance, came the all important matter of selecting a suitable text. And I wondered what our blessed Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ would take as a text if He were on the earth to-day and confronted, as we are, with the evils of the modern pleasure dance, and it occurred to me that He would preach from the doom of "a corrupt tree," or from the text, "Whosoever the carcase is, there will the eagles be gathered together." Or if St. Paul were to preach on my present subject, I fancy he would take the following as a text: "And have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove them." "For it is a shame even to speak of those things which are done of them in secret." Or if the Apostle James were to preach on this subject, I think his text would be: "Ye adulterers and adulteresses, know ye not that the friendship of the world is enmity with God. Whosoever, therefore, will be a friend of the world is an enemy of God." But for good reasons, my mind has settled upon the text first

read as the basis of my discourse. I find that this statement of Solomon is quoted perhaps more frequently than any other text of Scripture, in support of the pleasure dance. I wish it to be understood that I have no objections to the mere act of dancing, because calves dance, lambs caper, and an hart leaps. So that I could not well object to the mere act of dancing. Were I to do so, I should be condemning animal nature pure and simple, instead of condemning animal nature impure and concrete, which I am called upon to do in my subject. But what I do object to most emphatically is the fact of a professing Christian going to the world for his enjoyments. That is just what every professing Christian does when he goes to the modern pleasure dance for his enjoyment. He thus becomes guilty of committing the sin of which the Lord complained in the days of the prophet Jeremiah, when he exclaimed: "Be astonished, ye heavens, at this, and be ye horribly afraid. For my people have committed two evils; they have forsaken Me, the fountain of living waters, and hewed them out cisterns, broken cisterns that can hold no water." Yes, I do object to a professing Christian going to a miserable, poor, impure or "broken cistern," which at the best is only a receptacle—but lo! this is "a broken cistern that can hold no water." The idea of a Christian going to a cistern for a drink, while the fountain is ever springing up and flowing over with the life-giving stream. I do object to a son feeding on the "husks that the swine did eat," while in our "Father's home there is bread enough and to spare." Now, if poor sinners want to dance, why let them by all means. Poor creatures, they do not know any better than to go to the broken cistern for all they get. They do not know any better than to feed on the "husks that the swine did eat." But even in their case it is our plain duty to teach them better. But I must, and will, and do protest with all the vehemence of my soul against the modern pleasure dancer laying any claim to, or any proper alliance or relationship to or with our holy Christianity. "The fellowship of the world in enmity with God." "If any man have not the spirit of Christ he is none of His." Light can have no communion with darkness. The temple of God can have no agreement with idols! "He that soweth to the flesh, shall of the flesh reap corruption." If there is any one habit or indulgence practised in the world to-day, more than another, which savors of "sowing to the flesh," it is certainly the modern pleasure dance, but my text says there is "a time to dance."

I. In the first place, as I am set for the defence of the Gospel, I want to clear the Scripture of the unholy imputations made against it by the advocates of the modern pleasure dance, when they quote Scripture to justify themselves in their heathen and ungodly practice of dancing. I select this text because it seems to be quoted more frequently than any other passage in support of the dance. In the true exegesis of the text I think you will find nothing to support the practice of dancing either good or bad. Solomon is certainly referring to a certain number of things which do occur independent of their moral quality altogether. He is not speaking of the rightness or the wrongness of the twenty-eight things which have their season or time. He is not telling us that because these things have a season or time, that therefore we are to organize ourselves into companies and arrange the time and season when all these things shall occur. If you say, as you do say, in quoting this passage in support of the modern pleasure dance, that Solomon is commending the dance, just see where you will lead yourselves in looking at the other twenty-seven commendations! He who says there is "a time to dance," also says "a time to kill—a time to lose—a time to cast away—a time of war—a time to die," etc., etc. Now, if it is right to organize dancing parties on the ground of Solomon's statement as found in my text, it will

be equally right to organize laughing parties, and weeping parties, and parties to kill, and parties to make war, and parties to "embrace." The latter, however, is synonymous with dancing parties, according to the definition of Sam Jones—"dancing is hugging set to music." I know of no better definition of the modern dance than the above. You see then the absurdity of quoting my text in support of the modern pleasure dance. Again it is argued that "David danced before the Lord with all his might," and therefore it is right to dance to-day. Now, any person with a particle of common sense, will see that there can be no analogy between the dance of David, single and alone, and that of a promiscuous pleasure dance, so that I will not insult your intelligence by argument from such a standpoint. The modern dancer will also seek to justify his dancing by that of Aaron's sister, Miriam, or by the dancing in the nobleman's house when the prodigal returned. But why enlarge upon the subject from a Scriptural standpoint. I assert that there is little or no analogy between the Scriptural dance, and that of the indiscriminate dance of to-day—save that, perhaps of Salome, in the days of Herod, or the "vain fellows" referred to by David's wife. Spurgeon says: "When I hear of a dancing party I feel an uneasy sensation around the throat, remembering that a far greater preacher had his head danced off in the days of our Lord. However pleasing the polkas of Herodias might have been to Herod, they were death to John the Baptist. The caperings and waltzing of the ball-room are death to the solemn influences of our ministry, and many an ill-ended life, first received its bent for evil amid the flippancies of gay associations met to trip away the hours."

In clearing the Scripture, then, of the unholy imputations made against it, in seeking to make it support and justify the modern pleasure dance, I cannot do better than to sum up the Scripture teaching by the findings of Dr. Lyman Beecher, who says: "It will sufficiently appear, 1. That dancing was a religious act, both of the true and also of idol worship. 2. That it was practised exclusively on joyful occasions, such as national festivals or great victories. 3. That it was performed by maidens only. 4. That it was performed usually in the daytime in the open air, in high-ways, fields, or groves. 5. That men who perverted dancing from a sacred use to purposes of amusement were deemed infamous. 6. That no instances of dancing are found upon record in the Bible in which the two sexes united in the exercise, either as an act of worship or amusement. 7. That there is no instance upon record of social dancing for amusement except that of the "vain fellows," devoid of shame; irreligious families described by Job, which produced increased impiety and ended in destruction; and of Herodias, which terminated in the rash vow of Herod, and murder of John the Baptist." I am always reminded of a few lines in Shakespeare when I hear those dancers quoting Scripture:

"Mark you this, Bassanio,
The devil can cite Scripture for his purpose,
An evil soul, producing holy witness,
Is like a villain with a smiling cheek;
A goodly apple rotten at the heart;
O, what a goodly outside falsehood hath."

II. In the second place I deem it to be only fair to the advocates of the modern pleasure dance, to note some of the so-called arguments used in favor. And first. It is argued that our young people must have amusements of our day. Yes, dancing does rank high as an amusement! And why? It must be very amusing to engage in an entertainment where "hugging is set to music." "Where, hour after hour, it whirls

its giddy kaleidoscope around, bringing hearts so near that they almost beat against each other." Yes, it must be very amusing to join, hand-in-hand, and arm around waist, and thus the couple become wedded by the rhythm of the dance—face to face—breath to breath—breast to breast—limb pressed against limb—reel and whirl around—locked in each other's arms, till even a sensual Byron thinks the movements have gone beyond common decency, and prays :

"Pray put out the light,
Methinks the glare of yonder chandeller
Shines much too far—or I am much too near."

I declare to you that such amusement as the pleasure dance of to-day is a curse to the race, a libel on Christianity, and a dishonor to God. For the past few years we have been visited by that awful contagion known as "la grippe." This fell disease, as we well remember, was only a laughing-stock at first, but, ah, alas! it has come into our homes, and with its long, cold, and chilly fingers, it has seized our loved ones, and we found that its grip was the grip of death! But be it known that a far more deadly grip is seizing the fairest and the best in our land, namely, the grip of the voluptuous pleasure dancer. I was reading lately about a young woman who was teaching a young man the "grip" of the dance. She got his hands adjusted to the "grip." "All right," she said, "now proceed." And the poor, ignorant man said: "That is as far as I have ever gone, let's sit down and—for I am tired." Yes, our young people must have amusements! So says father and mother. But if these fathers and mothers who talk this way in favor of the dance, would read "From the Ball-Room to Hell," by T. A. Faulkner, ex-dancing-master, it seems to me, they could no more think of sending their daughters to a dancing-master to learn the art of dancing, as an amusement, than they could think of sending them into a den of rattlesnakes for amusement. I would certainly prefer the latter for my daughter. The death of the body is but a small matter, in my estimation, compared with the loss of virtue, to say nothing about the loss of the soul. Yes, I know of troubles that come to fathers and mothers, that I think are a thousand times worse than death! And, secondly, it is argued that our young people must have recreation, and therefore the dance is the best way to recreate themselves. Now, what is meant by the above argument is simply this. Our young people must have a sufficient amount of healthful exercise. They do not get it at home in the daytime, and therefore, some lodge-room or ball-room, or hotel premises must be fitted up for the occasion, so that our young people can go and enjoy themselves for four or five hours. Performance to begin at nine or ten o'clock at night, the time when those needing recreation the most should retire to rest. But the excuse for dancing, even in Brantford, is made on the plea, that young people must have recreation. I would really like to know how many young men and young women there are in this city, who, if they do their duty to father and mother, home and business, church and school during the day, would need any more physical exercise than these duties demand of them! I ask, how many? Echo answers, how many! I assert, then, if they take the exercise that the dance demands of them, they are sinning against their physical, intellectual, and moral well-being. You know, or ought to know, that the time, place, and accompaniments of the ball-room are all at variance with hygienic laws. Heated rooms, sumptuous feasting, and whirling round and round, and jumping up and down until two or three o'clock in the morning, and then sudden exposure to the cold night air, are not conducive to health of body, mind, or soul, and

therefore should be avoided as "the pestilence that walked in darkness, and as the destruction that wasteth at noon-day." And in the third place, it is argued that young people ought to become refined and graceful in their movements, and the dance is the most adapted among all the amusements to secure this important end. This claim is almost too absurd to be noticed, and yet I find that it weighs very heavily with some fathers and mothers. They want their children to know what to do with their feet when in society, and so they send them to a dancing-school to learn them how to become graceful in society. Yes, society! I am in sympathy with Sam Jones when he says he would rather his Mary would get bitten by a rattlesnake than by society. I have looked at some of these graceful young men and women sometimes, till I have become sick and disgusted with the movements. They remind me of Punch and Judy on wire springs, which attracted my attention when a boy. Give me the firm and manly steps of a young man who has caught his steps from the promptings of a conscious rectitude and high purpose in life, in contrast to the mincing tread of a brainless fop, whose grandest achievements are wrought in the ball-room. Give me the natural grace of a pure girl, taught by a pure mother, and governed by a native sense of delicacy, in contrast to the disgusting affectation of a pert young woman who has been trained by a foreign dancing-master. Graceful and polite, sure enough! Just see what we may hope to gain by all the training we can give our sons and daughters by the best skill of a goggle-eyed French dancing-master. A newspaper correspondent says: "I have seen a negro boy of seven years old, without the first element of an education, dance with a grace and agility of motion that would put to blush the brightest star of the fashionable ball-room. The most accomplished dancers in the world are untutored savages, who practise, in a state of nudity, around their camp-fires. What special incentive, then, can a cultivated, intellectual, refined youth have to waste precious time in an amusement in which, after all, he may be surpassed by a rude Hottentot, or even an ape." Yes, I saw a statement in a religious newspaper some time ago, declaring that the most graceful dancer that had ever been seen by human eyes, was that of a trained monkey! So that you, fathers and mothers, and sons and daughters, are spending precious time and money, and energy, (I will not say thought, because it does not take much thought to excel in dancing) to become as graceful as an untutored negro-boy or a trained monkey. So much then for the argument in favor of the gracefulness of the dancer.

III. In the third place, I want to assign some reasons why I so bitterly oppose the modern pleasure dance. Of course you can learn in part, why I oppose this so-called amusement, in what I have already said, and you will learn further, as I shall present to you a multitude of the most reliable witnesses that can be produced at the bar of justice. But for the sake of clearness and emphasis I wish to give you my personal reasons for opposing the pleasure, and, which to me amount to about the same thing, the parlor dance.

1. I oppose the custom of dancing on the grounds of citizenship, or, if you like, from an ethnic or race standpoint. We claim to be Anglo-Saxon, or Anglo-Norman. We boast of being Englishmen, Irishmen, Scotchmen, Canadians, or Americans. We claim to be civilized. We call ourselves Christians in opposition to heathens. Now, I hold that the modern pleasure dance is a relic of heathenism, and certainly should have no place in our civilization, and I unhesitatingly assert that it is diametrically opposed to the religion of our Lord Jesus Christ. "The friendship of the world is enmity with God." And any person who loves pleasure more than God, is an idolater! Deny it who can! I can understand

how our Pagan Indians down in Tuscarora, indulge themselves in their annual dances—such as their green corn dance, when their corn-fields reveal the full corn in the ear—and their snake dance, and their war dance, and sun dance, but I cannot understand, how so-called civilized and intelligent people, to say nothing about Christians, can go to the old barbaric relics of dancing for their enjoyments. The Mohammedans esteem dancing a sport unworthy the dignity of a man, and accordingly leave it to the women. The better class of heathens pay their servants for doing, what to us, is an amusement! You, with me, must have been wounded and grieved in your very soul, when you read in the daily papers, that on Sunday, February 16th, 1896: "A large staff of men were engaged all day in the work of preparing the Senate chamber for the ball to-morrow evening." Well, "to-morrow evening" came, and we are told that one of the greatest and most brilliant events in the history of this country took place. The Governor-General's ball of this year surpasses everything that has ever preceded it! Nothing else has been thought of or talked about for weeks past, and then the correspondent goes on to tell us that the Governor-General danced with some other man's wife, and our Prime Minister with some other man's wife, etc., etc. After a while another scene was enacted—some one representing an Indian chief, who was followed by his band of Indians, advanced with the customary war-whoops to the place where their Excellencies stood and delivered a short address in the Indian tongue. So you see that even in high life, we are not far in advance of the aborigines of this country. For I declare that the personation of the Indian chief, with his band of Indians, war-paint and feathers, and war-whoop, is the most in harmony with the nature of things, and of the whole proceedings at Ottawa on the night of February 17th, 1896. But what should receive the utter condemnation of every Christian in this so-called Christian country, is the fact that in the capital of our country, on Sunday, the 16th of February, 1896, (I am bound that you shall remember the dates) "a large staff of men were engaged all day in the work of preparing the Senate chamber for the Governor-General's ball." May the good Lord have mercy upon us, is my sincere and earnest prayer! Here we are spending much time, and talk, and money preaching sermons and passing resolutions at our conferences, assemblies, synods, and associations, with a view to a better observance of the Lord's Day, and then from headquarters, to be insulted and disgraced, as I feel I was two weeks ago to-day, and all over this old heathen custom—the dance!

2. I oppose the modern pleasure dance on physical grounds. I am free to acknowledge that the mere act of dancing may be indulged in as a wholesome and healthful exercise. But I am talking about the modern pleasure dance, which almost invariably begins near bed-time, when the body has been sufficiently exercised and ought now to be at rest. So that the dance of to-day is a sad waster of bodily strength and vigor, and many a young man and woman are sending themselves to premature graves—literally dancing themselves to death. I know whereof I affirm, but cannot enlarge.

3. I oppose the modern pleasure dance on intellectual grounds. The dance is an enemy to intellectual development. Of course I am fully convinced, by the cases referred to, as well as by my own observations, that a person need not have much brains to become a first-class dancer. Indeed, I have thought that the less brains a person has the more he will excel in the art of dancing. I once made the remark in public, and a school-teacher told me afterwards that such was really the case, as illustrated in the school—the best dancers were the poorest students. Rev. Dr. Hawley says: "The promiscuous dance requires little intelligence and no skill other than of the feet, in which the most ignorant are often

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the greatest adepts." Dr. Talmage, referring to the class who excel in the caperings of the ball-room, said that five hundred of them boiled down would not make a teacupful of calves-foot jelly. I quoted this statement on one occasion, and the dancers got so about it that I agreed to take it back, as they seemed to think it was not true. That is, they thought that five hundred of them would make a cup of calves-foot jelly. Those dancers had not brains enough to see that that same statement could be made with equal truthfulness about any other class of men or women. Show me a young man or a young woman who is carried away by the flippancy of the dance, and I will show you a person who will never excel in anything that pertains to intellectual attainment. Cicero, a poor heathen, says: "No one dances unless he is either drunk or mad."

4. I oppose the modern pleasure dance on domestic grounds. Do you not know that a very large portion of the domestic infelicity that abounds in this, and every other so-called Christian country, is traceable to the modern promiscuous dance? Yes, and that, too, in the very nature of things. It is no accident that the dance is what it is. It mingles the sexes in such closeness of personal approach and contact as, outside of the dance, is nowhere tolerated in respectable society. A gentleman, seeing the round dance for the first time, said: "If I should see a man offering to dance with my wife in that way I would horsewhip him." And yet that is the way they do it. No other way would be popular. And then it is so nice to change off. You dance with my wife and I will dance with yours, because, as a fashionable lady said to one of our ministers some time ago: "Sisters and wives do not enjoy dancing with their brothers and husbands as with other gentlemen, because there is not the same affinity between them." The whole truth was out before she knew it. "My darling, I love you," said a masked man to a masked woman at a masked ball the other night. This woman was his wife, but he did not know it. Now, what kind of a time think you, this husband and wife would have after the ball was over and they return to their own home? No wonder that the divorce courts have so much to do. No marvel that there are so many cases coming up in the courts for the alienation of the affections. There are multitudes of men and women in this and other lands whose condition is far worse than that of widowhood, and made so often by the promiscuous dance. How many of the murders and suicides of the day are traceable to the jealousies begotten of the promiscuous dance. We may not know, but I know every now and again such terminations to mortal existence are recorded. The promiscuous dance is one of the most successful jealousy-breeders in our land to-day. Yes, love which is as "strong as death," and jealousy which is as "cruel as the grave," and "which hath a most vehement flame," finds both its fuel and victims in the dance.

5. And I oppose the modern pleasure dance on moral grounds. Here is "a corrupt tree," which bringeth forth evil fruit, and that continually. Hence, by the law of the great teacher, it must be "hewn down and cast into the fire." This is the destructive sword coming upon our land, and the watchman must give warning at the peril of his own life and the life of the people. And so to-night upon the walls of Zion, I sound an alarm and declare that the sword is in our land in the shape and form of the modern pleasure dance, doing its ghastly and deadly work amongst the inhabitants of our land. I tell you plainly that one of the least of evils I have ever known or read of resulting from the licentious pleasure dance, was the beheading of John the Baptist. I know this will sound rather hard to some of you but I declare, this, to my mind, is a small evil compared to the ruin. On of the bodies and souls of our daughters. It is no good for you to blush at statements I am going to make. I have

no sympathy with preaching sermons to "men only" or to "women only," when the sins relate to both parties and are published to the world in our daily newspapers. I have seen in white and black that the number of children with an uncertain parentage of this and all Christian countries is in exact ratio to the amount of promiscuous dancing indulged in by the inhabitants of that country. Rev. Dr. Baird tells us that in France, one-third of the children belong to this class. The chief of police of New York City declares: "That one-half of the prostitutions of that city result from the dance." A Roman Catholic priest of the same city also declares that nineteen out of twenty of the confessions of fallen women goes to show that they have fallen by way of the dance. It cannot well be otherwise, when we consider the fact that the pleasure dance, the waltz, the round dance, and the square, and the dress, and all the concomitants of the modern pleasure dance have been planned and arranged with a view to excite the passions. Deny it who can! I know that some dancers are ashamed of the round dance, and so they tell us that they do not take part any more in a round dance. You can talk all you like about that, and it will weigh little or nothing with me; why, bless you, it is the easiest thing in the world to cut off the corners of a square dance. And pray, what have you then? Why the very thing you profess to be ashamed of, viz., the round dance. I say we cannot expect good fruit from such a corrupt tree. It is Lord Beaconsfield who defined the kind of costume sanctioned by society as the style "which enables ladies to display their natural beauties with a profusion worthy of a Grecian statue." Now tell me wherein the great strength of this mighty giant lieth? And only one answer can be given, viz.: Lust! Passion! Or, as Dr. W. T. Aikins, of Toronto, puts it: "Consciousness of the sex is the basis of the dance." There can be no doubt that as "Alcohol is the spirit of beverages, so sex is the spirit of the dance." But some good meaning people will advocate the harmlessness of the social parlor dance, while they would not tolerate for a moment the promiscuous ball-room dance. It would be well for all such to reason out this matter as they reason other questions. Ex-Dancing Master Faulkner tells us, as surely as the first drink of the drunkard was just a social glass—and the first game of the gambler was just a social game—so "three-fourths of the outcasts had a man's arm about them for the first time when they were young girls at a social dance." He further asserts that "Some of the lowest and most disgusting deeds, of which I have had any knowledge, have occurred at, and in connection with, the most fashionable parlor dances." He entreats parents not to discredit his statements. Beautiful girls, as pure and as innocent as an angel, robbed of virtue, and ruined for life inside of three months. Would to God that all mothers were like Mrs. Sherman, wife of General Sherman, in their relation to the dance. Mrs. Sherman says: "I have always given the miserable dance a silent condemnation by refusing to allow any of my daughters to participate in it under any circumstance, but I have avoided the evil as something at the sight of which my soul revolted." Miss Sherman declined to dance with H. R. H. Prince Arthur when he visited Washington, some years ago. Such a mother and daughter are in every way worthy of being designated ladies.

I know that it is thought by some that I am too strong and severe in my denunciation of the modern pleasure dance. But if you saw the evil as I see it, you would certainly sympathize with me in venturing to sound an alarm, even in this Christian city of Brantford. But to show you that I am not alone, but that I am in the very best of company, and that my stand and statements are no stronger than are being made by the greatest

and best men occupying the best pulpits of Christendom to-day, I will give you a few out of the many quotations I have by me from these authors in support of my stand against the pleasure dance.

There are in San Francisco 2,500 abandoned women. Prof. La Floris says: "I can safely say that three-fourths of these women were led to their downfall through the influence of dancing."

The Matron of the Florence Knight Mission, N.Y., says: "Nine-tenths of the fallen women there have fallen through the dance." Listen to our own, now sainted, Dr. Douglas, who uttered the following not long before he went to the Gloryland: "Tell me of the buccaneers of the Spanish Main; tell me of the very men that gambled for the seamless coat of the crucified Son of God; I would sooner trust innocence in the hands of any or all of these than with your sleek, oleaginous and polished scoundrels that float about in society, one of whom, on Beaver Hall Hill, under God's sunlight, in response to the inquiry for a registry office, conducted a poor country girl to portals infernal, where she was only saved by the warning and compassion of the keeper, who had more mercy than the gilded fiend. And where is the villain who has wrought this ruination? Where? Welcomed into the salons of St. Denis and Sherbrooke Streets, whisking around the daughters of wealth in the revolting proximities and the semi-nude indelicacies of the waltz and polka, fascinating the feminine heart like as the insect is fascinated by the devouring flame. Fascinating? Yes; all the more because of the dark romance that is whispered about that 'Charlie is a little fast, you know.'"

The following is from the Pastoral Letter of the Archbishops and Bishops of the Roman Catholic Church of the United States: "In this connection we consider it to be our duty to warn our people against these amusements which may easily become to them an occasion of sin, and especially against the fashionable dances, which, as at present carried on, are revolting to every feeling of delicacy and propriety, and are fraught with the greatest danger to morals."

I cite next the testimony of prominent witnesses in the Episcopal Church of the United States, and here I would state that dancing is as much out of harmony with the religion of Christ in the English Church, the Baptist Church, the Presbyterian and the other churches, as it is in the Methodist, and yet some people leave our Church and go to other churches because they are allowed to dance while there, and not while with us.

Bishop Hopkins, of Vermont, says: "In the period of youthful education, I have shown that dancing is chargeable with waste of time, the interruption to useful study, the indulgence of personal vanity and display, and the premature incitement of the passions. At the age of maturity, it adds to those no small danger to health, by late hours, flimsy dresses, heated rooms, and exposed persons; while its incongruity with strict Christian sobriety and principle, and its tendency to the love of dissipation, are so manifest that no ingenuity can make it consistent with the covenant of baptism."

Bishop Meade, of Virginia, says: "It has always been considered so disreputable to excel in this as a public reformer, that such persons have been excluded sometimes from civil, and always from religious privileges, and from respectable society. Can the practice of it, then, even in a more private way, be suitable or becoming in a serious Christian? Very few persons can be found who do not answer, no. I shall not dwell on these two arguments further, for obvious reasons. To my mind they are conclusive to show that social dancing is not among the neutral things,

which, within certain limits, we may do at pleasure, and even that is not among the things lawful, but not expedient, but that it is, in itself, wrong, improper, and of bad effect."

Bishop Coxe, of New York, says: "The enormities of theatrical exhibitions, and the lasciviousness of dances, too commonly tolerated in our times, are so disgraceful to the age, and so irreconcilable with the Gospel of Christ, that I feel it my duty to the souls of my flock to warn those who run with the world, to 'the same excess of riot' in these things, that they presume not to come to the holy table. Classes preparing for confirmation are informed that I will not lay hands, knowingly, on any one who is not prepared to renounce such things, with other abominations of 'the world, the flesh, and the devil.' Let all such choose deliberately whom they will serve; and if salvation be worth striving for, let them be persuaded to a sober life, to self-denial, and to pure and innocent enjoyments which the Gospel not only permits, but which it only can create. It is high time that the lines should be drawn between worldly and godly living; and I see no use in a Lent that is not sanctified to such ends."

Thank God for such a grand man in the Episcopal Church. I was born and raised up to a certain age in the Episcopal Church, and still love and respect my mother.

The Baptist Quarterly says: "Always the dance inclines to multiply opportunities of physical proximity and contact between the sexes—always to make them more prolonged and more daring. . . . But if what has already been said and suggested fails to convince any that our analysis of the pleasure of the dance is true, we have a little problem for their solution: Why is it that the dance alone, of all the favorite diversions of a gay society, requires the association of the two sexes in it? . . . And then consider, ye Christian fathers, and brothers, and husbands, to what horrible hazards of contact the opportunities of the dance expose your daughters, and sisters, and wives. For who that has gained any experience of the world is ignorant of the fact that hardly once does a considerable party assemble, even in the most respectable society, without including some man whom his associates know to be a libertine at heart, if not in life? To think of pure women being pastured on, with palms of pollution, and with imminent eyes of adultery, by such a human bull of Bashan the evening long in the promiscuous corral of the dance! What better facilities could be imagined for an accomplished voluptuary to compass the capture of his prey? . . . Oh, Fashion! Fashion! What power hast thou to browbeat holy nature, so that she dares not speak to assert her sacred claims against thy imperious sway."

I now adduce the testimony of the Presbyterian Church: "It is, therefore, resolved, that the practice of dancing, of giving or attending private or public dancing parties or theatrical exhibitions, and of educating their children in the art of dancing, by professing Christians, is clearly forbidden by the spirit of the Gospel, condemned by our Confession of Faith, and by the decision of our highest church judicatories, and in violation of the covenant obligations entered into by every one who connects himself with the Church of Christ; and that such conduct is an offence which a due regard to the purity as well as the peace of the Church will not permit her courts to overlook or disregard. This Synod does, therefore, recommend and enjoin that the sessions of all churches within our bodies treats this sin as other recognized sins are to be treated, and, by proper instruction, admonition, and reproof, endeavor in the spirit of Christian gentleness and fidelity to remove all such practices from our churches. And that when milder measures fail, they proceed by the exercise of discipline to correct the evil, or to separate those who wilfully persist in these sinful practices from the body of the Church, that the cause of Christ be

not hindered, and that we may thus co-operate with Him in presenting to Himself a glorious Church, not having spot or wrinkle, or any such thing, but that it may be holy and without blemish."

The next witness is Rev. William S. Potts, D.D., a Presbyterian, who says: "The female is expected to make her appearance in a ball dress, which means that as much of the person as modesty will at all permit, shall be exposed. She may be held in the embrace of the smooth-tongued whom she never saw before, and whose heart is filled with lust, and her panting breast drawn close to his, while waltzing or practising any of the still more indelicate dances now most fashionable. Do these assemblies and acts commend themselves as very proper for either your sons or your daughters? There is enough of virtue and sense of sound propriety yet to decide that these are not the places for lovers of light and purity. We come next in order to the dancing party given by an individual in his own house. . . . Let us examine into the difference between this case and the public ball-room. . . . Now, the rules of the ball-room are the rules in his house, the moment the dance is announced as the amusement of the evening. The same dress, the same indelicate dances, the same excitement, the same refreshments and drinking, the same late and unseasonable hours; the numbers, too, are about the same. There is a little less caution and restraint on the part of the females, because of a sense of a greater security against impropriety from its being a private party."

Dr. Talmage says: "The ancient fathers, aroused by the indecent dances of those days, gave emphatic evidence against any participation in the dance. St. Chrysostom says, 'The feet were not given for dancing, but to walk modestly; not to leap impudently like camels.' One of the dogmas of the ancient church reads: 'A dance is the devil's passion; and he that entereth into a dance entereth into his possession. The devil is the gate to the middle and to the end of the dance. As many passes as a man makes in dancing, so many passes does he make to hell.' Elsewhere these old dogmas declare: 'The woman that singeth in the dance is the princess of the devil; and those that answer are his clerks, and the beholders are his friends, and the music is his bellows, and the fiddlers are the ministers of the devil; for, as when hogs strayed, if the hogherd call one, all assemble together, so the devil calleth one woman to sing in the dance, or to play on some instrument, and presently all the dancers gather together.' This wholesale and indiscriminate denunciation grew out of the utter dissoluteness of those ancient days. So great at one time was the offence to all decency, that the Roman Senate decreed the expulsion of all dancers and dancing-masters from Rome. But while we have a right to the enjoyments of life, we never will countenance sinful indulgences. I here set forth a group of what might be called the dissipations of the ball-room. They swing an awful scythe of death. Are we to stand idly by, and let the work go on, lest in the rebuke we tread upon the long tail of some popular vanity?" The whirlpool of the ball-room drags down the life, the beauty, and the moral worth of the city. In this whirlpool of imported silks goes out the life of many of our best families. Bodies and souls innumerable are annually consumed in this conflagration of ribbons. This style of dissipation is the abetter of pride, the instigator of jealousy, the sacrificial altar of health, the defiler of the soul, the avenue of lust, and curse of the town. The tread of this wild, intoxicating, heated midnight dance jars all the moral hearthstones of the city. The physical ruin is evident. What will become of those who work all day and dance all night? A few years will turn them out nervous, exhausted imbeciles."

I have only been able to present to you a mere tithe of what other churches have to say on this subject, but sufficient, I think, to convince you all, that I am in complete harmony with the best minds of the best men of the leading churches of our day. In conclusion, I beg to say that I have tried in all good conscience, before God and man, to deliver my own soul, by sounding "an alarm in Zion," and I think you must be convinced that the modern pleasure dance has no support from the word of God. That it is at variance with our highest and best manhood and womanhood. That it is an enemy to our physical, intellectual, and moral well-being and that it is the prolific source of idleness, ignorance, jealousies, ill-health, lust, despair, and death to body and soul for time and eternity. In the name of Almighty God, I lay the axe at the root of this corrupt tree, and resolve, by the power of the Holy Ghost, to do my utmost to fell this upas tree, and "cast it into fire," and burn it down into ashes, and bury it so deep as never more to be resurrected to despoil, corrupt, and poison the sons of men—man made in the image of God and woman to be "an helpmeet for him."

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